



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	322/05
2. Advertiser	The Age
3. Product	Media
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Violence Other – section 2.2
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 8 November 2005
7. DETERMINATION	Upheld – discontinued or modified

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The opening scene in this television advertisement depicts a young woman withdrawing money from an ATM. She is carrying *The Age* carry bag on her shoulder. As she leaves the ATM, she is followed by a young man. Suddenly the man runs up from behind and snatches the woman's carry bag. The young woman screams: "*Hey, stop!*". The thief runs down the street and into an alley where he stops, looks around and then proceeds to empty the contents of the bag onto the ground. We see the woman's purse, iPod and other belongings left on the ground. He then puts *The Age* carry bag (now empty) on his shoulder and walks along a city street, smiling proudly and feeling fashionable carrying *The Age* carry bag.

THE COMPLAINT

Comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

"I find this ad extremely offensive as it makes light of the following: predatory behaviour towards women, violent assault, robbery - all in the name of selling a newspaper... I find this depiction which seems to accept violent behaviour highly inappropriate, particularly as I've had family members fall victim to just such behaviour."

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complaint/s regarding this advertisement included the following:

"... our intention was only to exaggerate the fashion appeal of the bag in a humorous way that also captured the attention of viewers."

"For this reason we used an unrealistic scenario of having the thief clearly disregard all the valuables in the bag, and with tongue firmly in cheek, had him 'showing off' of the bag by parading down the main street, John Travolta style, to a Saturday Night Fever type soundtrack..."

"... we were confident that viewers would find the ad amusing and as intended..."

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board ("Board") considered whether this advertisement breaches section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the "Code").

The Board was of the view that the scenes in the advertisement were very realistic. The Board took into consideration that the main character in the advertisement was shown to wait for the young woman to leave the ATM so that he could attack her and that such actions were clearly predatory. The young woman was shown to be distressed by her attacker's actions, crying out: "*Hey, stop!*"

Clause 2.2 of the Code provides that: “Advertisements must not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised.” The Board determined that the presentation of the violent images in the advertisement were not justifiable in the context of the product being advertised (being a newspaper) and, as such, the advertisement was in breach of the Code.

The Board noted that the advertiser had intended for the humour (in the closing scenes of the advertisement) to prevail over the serious nature of the attack, however, the Board determined that given the realistic portrayal of the attack, this goal had not been achieved.

The Board therefore upheld this complaint.